

## House Republican Press Release

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### Noujaim Testifies On Missing Persons Day Bill



#### *Waterbury Legislator Hopes to Bring Awareness to Missing Persons Cases*

**HARTFORD-** State Representative Selim Noujaim (R-Waterbury) testified this week on legislation he has introduced in the 2006 Regular Session of the Connecticut General Assembly which would have the governor designate August 24<sup>th</sup> of each year as Missing Persons Day in the State of Connecticut. The proposed bill aims at raising awareness of the plight of state citizens who have been reported missing. The bill also asks the governor to conduct suitable exercises in the State Capitol or elsewhere as the Governor designates for the observance of that day.

A public hearing was held on the bill on Monday before the Government Administration and Elections Committee. Noujaim says that he was encouraged to introduce the legislation after conferring with friends and family of William Smolinski, Jr., a 32-year-old Waterbury native who has been missing since August 24, 2004.

“I had never met Billy, I had never known where he lived nor had I ever met his parents,” testified Representative Noujaim in recounting a summer 2005 vigil he attended in Naugatuck held for Smolinski. “I saw the pain in the eyes of his parents, his sister, his friends, and in the eyes of more than two hundred people who were in attendance. I was motivated by their agony to try to help make a difference.”

Every year in Connecticut between 200 and 300 juveniles are reported missing, including runaways and stranger abductions. This doesn’t even take into consideration missing adults. Representative Noujaim says he wants to bring attention to the plight of those missing people, and the families and friends they leave behind who are tortured by not knowing the whereabouts or fate of those missing individuals.